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**Statement of U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick Following House
Approval of Morocco Free Trade Agreement**

"We appreciate the House's swift passage of the U.S. – Morocco Free Trade Agreement with a strong show of support: 323 to 99. This action demonstrates our shared determination to level the playing field and open markets for American farmers, workers, businesses and consumers.

"In the course of the last year we've been pleased to work closely with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to lay the foundation for the overwhelming support for four FTA's – Chile, Singapore, Australia and now Morocco – as well as the AGOA Acceleration Act.

"I want to especially thank Representatives Roy Blunt, Bill Thomas, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Phil English, Charlie Rangel, Greg Meeks, John Tanner and Joe Crowley, who have been instrumental in rallying support for this agreement.

"This agreement opens a significant market to American exports, helping us create jobs here at home. Furthermore, it affirms our commitment to a growing, open Middle East region and President Bush's vision of a Middle East Free Trade Area. Millions of Americans and Moroccans depend on vibrant and growing trade for their jobs. And this Morocco -U.S. FTA will only add to that number.

"Trade Promotion Authority has been put to good use: we have completed agreements with twelve countries and are negotiating with ten others. Our new and pending FTA partners, taken together, would constitute America's third largest export market.

"We are especially delighted that Congress has approved the Morocco FTA, as well as the Australia FTA last week, right before its August recess. Coming just before key negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda in Geneva next week, Congress has sent the world a powerful message – America is committed to opening markets and contributing to global economic growth and development."

Background

This Administration has completed free trade agreements with Jordan, Chile, Singapore, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Australia, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, and Bahrain.

The United States is currently negotiating free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Thailand and with the five nations of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) – Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.

In addition to our bilateral negotiations, the United States will continue to aggressively press for free markets around the world, through the World Trade Organization and throughout the hemisphere, through the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

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